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DEPARTMENT OF NURSING EDUCATION

IN CHARGE OF

ISABEL M. STEWART, R.N.

THE FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE CENTENNIAL

Word comes from all parts of the country, telling of plans for the celebration of the Nightingale Centennial on May 12th. They are taking the form of large public dinners, church services, tableaux, and lantern talks, and it is hoped before the year is out, to have some pageants and plays. Several of the prominent magazines are publishing articles on Miss Nightingale, among them *The Nation*, *The Literary Digest*, and *The Delineator*. The moving pictures are featuring the celebration, the schools in many cities will have special talks during the month on Miss Nightingale and nursing, and the libraries are preparing to furnish readers with books both about her and by her. The movement, altogether, seems to be going forward in a very promising way; it will be continued throughout the whole centennial year.

If the celebration meant nothing else, it would be well worth while for the sake of the numbers of people who are getting a new acquaintance with and a new admiration for the founder of modern nursing. It seems particularly important that pupil nurses should have a chance to get some of the inspiration that comes from the story of her life and that they should have the joy of reading some of her fascinating books and articles. It is amazing to find numbers of graduate nurses who have never heard of *Notes on Nursing* and who still have the most hazy idea of who Miss Nightingale was and why her name is so honored, not only in her native land, but here in America and the world over.

To superintendents of nurses and teachers, her writings are a perfect mine of information. No one has ever begun to get down to the bottom of things as she did, to separate the essential from the non-essential, in education, in administration, in nursing itself. Her clear and vigorous English, her sparkling wit, her hard "horse sense" and the touch of satire which runs through all her writings, make her a joy to read.

One of the dominant impressions which we get from her life was her passion for work and her profound belief in the necessity for long, thorough preparation for one's work. Perhaps this last is one of the best of the many lessons she has for this generation.

The following extracts from an unpublished letter to an American gentleman, in 1866, repeat in a slightly different form, ideas which she constantly brings forward in her books and articles:

But I would also say to all young ladies who are called to any particular vocation, qualify yourselves for it as a man does for his work. Don't think you can undertake it otherwise. No one should attempt to teach the Greek language until he is master of the language, and this he can become only by hard study.

If you are called to man's work, do not exact a woman's privileges,—the privilege of inaccuracy, of weakness, ye muddle heads. Submit yourselves to the rule of business, as men do, by which alone you can make God's business succeed; for He has never said that He will give His success and His blessing to inefficiency, to sketchy and unfinished work.

But to all women I would say, look upon your work, whether it be an accustomed or an unaccustomed work, as upon a trust confided to you. This will keep you alike from discouragement and presumption, from idleness, and from overtaxing yourself.

If I could really give the lessons of my life to my country women and yours—(indeed, I fain look upon us all as one nation) the lessons of my mistakes, as well as the rest, I would; but, for this there is no time. I would only say work,—work in silence at first, in silence for years,—it will not be time wasted. Perhaps in all your life it will be the first you will afterwards find to have been best spent; and it is very certain that without it you will be no worker. You will not produce one "perfect work," but only a botch in the service of God.

HOW TO RECRUIT MORE QUALIFIED WOMEN FOR TEACHING AND EXECUTIVE POSITIONS¹

BY MAUDE LANDIS, A.B., R.N.

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Generously, unselfishly, the training schools have supported all propaganda that secured for our nurses who had served overseas and had returned wearied and restless, and for those who had served at home, all possible benefits of graduate instruction and nursing service, which took the form principally of Public Health Service. The training schools included in their curricula introductory courses, and stimulated interest among the undergraduates by arranging Public Health affiliations for this very necessary constructive and reconstructive measure. Nor have we ever begrudged its popularity, but it has established definitely the fact that we must, by some similar method of appeal, attract qualified graduates to assist us in the development of our training schools as educational institutions, so that we may be able to continue producing properly trained women for the many nursing activities.

In the past, too often our students have, on graduation, drifted into institutional positions by way of head-nurse-ships in the larger

¹ Extracts from a paper read at Teachers College Alumnae Conference, February, 1920.

hospitals, or as subordinate administrators in the smaller ones, but we can not leave to chance such potential educators and executives. We must so fill our positions with qualified women, that their example, professional, ethical and technical, will prove incentives to our students in training "to go and do likewise." We must so dignify our training school positions that they will seem worth while. We must so acknowledge the talents of those occupying them that they will more generously and spontaneously coöperate and build.

The training school performs a dual function: that of administration in the care of the sick, and that of instruction of students in training, thus furnishing positions with interweaving responsibilities. But what official status do we grant those occupying these positions?

Early this winter, it was considered necessary by our own institution to have as nearly as possible up-to-date information concerning what other training schools were doing and planning and paying, etc., and among the questions asked of 75 schools was one, "How many graduates are in your training school office? What positions?" Sixty-one replies promptly came back, and among these only 21 mentioned the night supervisor, and yet the administrative versatility, the teaching responsibility and the personality required for such an office can be looked for only in a most unusual woman. That this might have been an error of omission is not likely, for we know of many institutions where the night supervisor's place, even in the dining room, does not carry the official recognition her position should warrant.

I wonder, too, just what is our recognition of the instructor's position. She has studied and prepared herself, at great expense and with much sacrifice, to teach what we deem essential for the proper instruction in the training school, but when she becomes one of our staff we restrict her privileges; we direct her schedule in too small detail. She often feels she is a "fifth wheel" and robbed of her initiative, she loses her enthusiasm.

The living accommodations play a big part in the contentment of institutional workers. An attractive single bedroom, modestly though comfortably furnished, well lighted and ventilated, offsets a worrisome day. Convenient suite arrangements are worth considering. For the head nurses, a commodious general reception room with kitchenette privileges is desirable. I am inclined to think that were we to have a new nurses' home, and could we keep one of our present dormitories, I should not have the "white nurses,"—staff nurses—live in the new home, a certain class distinction being important psychologically.

And what about "on and off duty" hours of our training school people? We have to face the fact that the heavy responsibilities of our schools, on and off duty, are discouraging many wonderfully capable women, and forcing them to seek positions where they may specialize in some phase of nursing activity, and yet have enough time to themselves to feel and act normally.

It should be the rule that daily and weekly off duty hours are observed, with a whole day off occasionally. The teachers and executives should be active members of nursing organizations. There should be frequent opportunities for them to attend local, district and state meetings and even national conventions, especially those that may be held in the immediate vicinity. Contact with other people with the same problems, the opportunity to visit other institutions, the information that comes by word of mouth through the presentation of papers of current interest, different scenery in general, even the car ride, and temporary freedom from responsibility, break the crushing monotony, bring back the old time enthusiasms and the nurses return all the better satisfied with their own positions and desirous of rendering better service.

As to the matter of salaries, I am not prepared to state amounts, these days, but since the dollar of a few years ago doesn't have the same value to-day, the salary for the position should be increased proportionately. Institutional positions include maintenance which now is a big item. It might be well to estimate this cost, since logically this is a part of the salary, as is also the hospital and nursing attention, in need. There should be a definite increase, small though it may be, at stated times, perhaps every six months.

It may be of interest to know the range of salaries with maintenance that are being paid by the 75 hospitals to which our questionnaire was sent:

Night supervisor, \$50 to \$80, (two give \$90, one \$100, one \$125)

Head nurses or supervisors

General wards, \$45 to \$90

Operating rooms, \$45 to \$100 (one gives \$110, one \$125)

Obstetrical wards, \$50 to \$80

Private wards, \$50 to \$90, (one gives \$125)

Children's ward, \$45 to \$90 (one gives \$100, one \$125)

Dispensary, \$40 to \$90, (one gives \$100, one \$125)

Private nurses, \$4 to \$5 per day, in some localities; some on 12-hour duty, others on 24-hour.

The basis of intelligent coöperation and successful administration is the understanding of common problems. That each teacher and executive may enjoy her own share in the progress of the school and live up to it enthusiastically, frequent discussions as to its policies

should be planned for. Conferences with educators along other lines clarify doubts. Consultations with hospital and training school executives and board members result in better understanding and create the vital *esprit de corps*. Head nurses' conferences bring forth discussions that show plainly the interest, study and initiative the various head nurses are giving to their own share of responsibility; and disclose the willingness to coöperate if directed and permitted.

These latter conferences are more effective if conducted according to parliamentary procedure, and if full records are kept. I have always felt that our educational responsibility should include this instruction, and have found the plan well worth while. I believe it could be made more comprehensive, were there some plan for exchange of head nurses among different hospitals.

These are some of the ways by which we should keep our able graduates in training school positions. But you ask, "Shall we give all and make no requirements?" On the contrary, first having made our positions as attractive as is reasonable, and as dignified and honorable as is befitting the function of a training school, we should make as high requirements of those who would fill them as would be demanded in any other institutions of higher education, and these requirements would take into consideration preparation, training, experience, personality, loyalty, and ability for the positions to be filled.

THE PROBATIONER AND HABIT FORMATION

BY MAUD MUSE

Instructor, Stanford School for Nurses

That the probationer, in making her adjustments to hospital life, must needs form new habits, goes without saying. Whether those habits shall be good or bad rests largely with the instructors.

It is generally conceded that certain routine nursing procedures, of a purely mechanical type, may with profit be first, standardized so as to require the least possible expenditure of time and energy, and second, repeatedly performed until largely automatic, thus leaving the conscious mind free to occupy itself with the more vital phases of nursing. All instructors hold this ideal, but some fail to realize its fulfillment, chiefly because they labor blindly, having no clear conception in their own minds as to the best methods to employ in the formation of good habits.

"*Instincts, the Roots of Habits.*"—The instincts possessed by the lower animals are even more numerous than those bestowed upon man, but with less possibility of modification, a marked ability to